United Nations S/PV.7480

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7480th meeting
Tuesday, 7 July 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Van Bohemen	(New Zealand)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mr. Gombo
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Davison
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2015/472)

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15-21055 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first formal meeting of the Council for the month of July, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Ramlan Bin Ibrahim, Permanent Representative of Malaysia, for his service as President of the Council for the month of June. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Ibrahim and his delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2015/472)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/472, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chambas.

Mr. Chambas: I am pleased to be here today to brief the Council on the situation in West Africa and the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA). Further to the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa (S/2015/472), which is before the Council, I would like to highlight a few issues and update members on the most recent developments.

The general picture in West Africa today is that of, first, continuous concerns regarding the security situation in the Lake Chad Basin area and its humanitarian impact, in spite of the progress made by the affected countries in the fight against Boko Haram; secondly, continuing risks of instability in several West African nations in the lead-up to their presidential elections later in the year, following the resounding success of the Nigerian electoral process; and, lastly, transnational organized crime and the Ebola virus disease remain a matter of serious concern in spite of continuing national, regional and international efforts to curb these threats. These are areas that will continue to guide our preventive diplomacy and good-offices efforts in the months to come.

Since May, the Boko Haram insurgency has stepped up its attacks and violence in the Lake Chad Basin area mainly against civilian targets, leading to renewed deterioration in the security and humanitarian situations. Although Boko Haram's structure and capacity for conventional warfare has been destroyed, that terrorist group continues to perpetrate violent attacks and rampages not only in Nigeria but also in the Niger and Chad, as seen in recent weeks. This underscores the necessity for continued vigilance and coordinated regional action. In this regard, the unprecedented solidarity exemplified by the joint military operations carried out by Nigeria, Chad, the Niger and Cameroon against Boko Haram terrorists since January, with the support of international partners, is indeed commendable.

Immediately after his inauguration, President Muhammadu Buhari visited the Niger and Chad on 3 and 4 June to highlight the high-level consultations and galvanize support in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism. On 11 June, an extraordinary summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission member States plus Benin was held in Abuja, where far-reaching decisions were taken to accelerate the effective operationalization of the multinational Joint Task Force. To ensure continuity in the war effort, greater support from all partners remains crucial. In the longer term, addressing the root causes of the insurgency constitutes a condition for lasting stability. A coordinated post-conflict strategy is required to help restore normal living conditions and livelihood activities and organize the return of refugees and persons displaced by the conflict.

While Boko Haram-related insecurity has impeded field assessment in the northern areas, I am pleased to report that in the context of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, which I chair on behalf of the

United Nations, the two countries have not relented on completing the demarcation of their common land boundary. As the Commission is actively preparing to initiate confidence-building projects in favour of populations in Cameroon and Nigeria adversely affected by the demarcation, I should note that the United Nations support team has already outlined a completion strategy that establishes specific timetables and projections for concluding the work of the Commission and for passing responsibility for residual and follow-up activities to a bilateral commission exclusively comprising the two countries.

In Guinea, the inter-Guinean political dialogue kicked off on 19 June, with the international partners, including the United Nations, sitting as observers. Subsequently, however, the representative of the International Organization of la Francophonie and I assumed an informal facilitation role at the request of Government facilitators and the parties. It is pertinent to note that the contentious issue of the sequencing of the elections has been resolved in favour of the holding of the presidential election before the communal and local elections. Longstanding contentious elements dividing the Government and the opposition are now being addressed, notably strengthening the technical capacity of the Independent National Electoral Commission, a credible electoral register, and the monitoring and evaluation of the preparations for the presidential election, with the support of the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Organization of la Francophonie, and bilateral and multilateral partners.

One remaining major challenge is the financial and expertise gap that needs to be bridged for the electoral process in Guinea to be on course. Time is of the essence, given that we have only about four months until the presidential elections. While a number of partners have made pledges, it is expedient that these promises be redeemed soonest.

Concerning Burkina Faso, the International Follow-up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso met on 12 June 2015, in the margins of the twenty-fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, in Johannesburg. The Group noted the progress made in the preparations for elections, notably with the completed revision of the voters' register. Meanwhile, there are concerns regarding what is emerging as the fragile equilibrium of the transition, and in particular the underlying tensions between Prime Minister Zida and the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP). Our concerns increased following the recent incident on 29 June, when elements of the RSP reportedly attempted to arrest Prime Minister Zida upon his return from a foreign trip. Several gunshots were heard in the Regiment's camp that evening. I should, however, mention the commendable efforts made by President Kafando in appeasing the situation and in keeping the transition on track towards the holding of presidential elections on 10 October. Meanwhile, I plan to visit Ouagadougou upon my return to the region, jointly with the Chairperson of the ECOWAS Commission and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, in our capacity as co-Chairs of the International Follow-up and Support Group.

Before I conclude, let me draw the Council's attention to the continuous challenges posed by the Ebola virus disease in the region. On 24 June, UNOWA facilitated a telephone conference between the Mano River Union secretariat and peace missions in the region, during which emphasis was placed on the difficulties encountered in border areas, as none of the security and confidence-building mechanisms is operational, and restrictions due to Ebola continue to affect local livelihoods. Despite significant achievements in the fight against Ebola, Guinea and Sierra Leone are yet to attain zero-case situations. Most worrisome is the fact that, after declaring a zero-case situation on 9 May, Liberia has detected three new cases; the last was confirmed on 28 June. There have been remarkable examples of neighbourly solidarity in facing the Ebola crisis. With the epidemic still active and in a sensitive political context, especially in Guinea, the resources in place since 2014, including those of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, remain essential to achieving the goal of zero Ebola cases.

The President: I thank Mr. Chambas for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.